

Hamid Sulaiman

# **FREEDOM HOSPITAL**



### **YASMINE**

Born in 1984 in Damascus, she comes from a moderate Sunni family. For ten years, she lived in the United Arab Emirates with her family, then studied to be a pharmacist in Alep and got a master's in Damascus. She is now about to receive her doctors in the U.S. Yasmine is one of the young Syrians who threw themselves into the revolution. She runs Freedom Hospital, an underground hospital in Houria, a town in northern Syria.



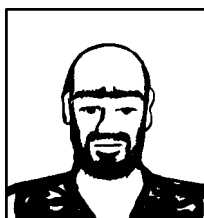
### **SOPHIE**

Born in 1980 in Damascus, she and her family left for France when she was eight. After studying at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, she became a journalist. She has known Yasmine since childhood; they spent their vacations together in Damascus. When the revolution begins, only journalists working for pro-Assad media are allowed in Syria, so Sophie decides to go work secretly on a documentary about Freedom Hospital and its patients.



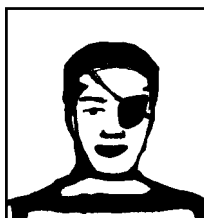
### **ABU TAYSIR**

Born in 1953 in Hama, he survived the massacres there in 1982, but his brother and cousins were executed before his eyes. Accused by the regime of being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood (although he was actually a communist), he spent a total of eleven years in prison. He took part in the initial demonstrations, but after the regime massacres tens of thousands of civilians, he grows closer to the Muslim Brotherhood, and is then put in charge of the Free Syrian Army's local militia.



### **ABU AZAB**

Born in Alep in 1982, he is a mechanic when the revolution begins. Pro-Bashar at first, he believes the revolution is a plot against Assad's just government, until he loses his pregnant wife and two children to the Syrian army's regular bombardment. He then joins the Free Syrian Army.



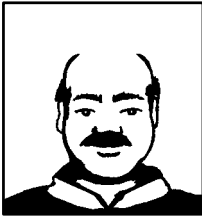
### **"ONE-EYED" ELIAS / JAMAL**

Born in 1981 in Al-Qamishli, an Assyrian and practicing Christian. He leaves to work in Qatar when the revolution starts. Shortly thereafter, he quits his job and returns to Syria to take part in the demonstrations going on throughout town. He is arrested during one of these and tortured by the secret police, who suspect him of having been sent by Prince Hamad of Qatar to overthrow the regime. As a result of the torture, he loses an eye.



### **HAVAL**

Born in 1988 in the Kurdish neighborhood of Zor Ava in Damascus, he has a master's degree in philosophy. He is doing his military service when the revolution begins, and deserts the army when he is ordered to fire on demonstrators. Wounded by gunfire during a demonstration, he is awaiting a kidney transplant. A patient at Freedom Hospital, he doesn't need to be there all the time, but stays there anyway to be near Zahabiyah.



### **DR. YAZAN**

Born in 1972 in Daraa, the city where the revolution broke out in the south of Syria in 2011. The child of a Sunni family close to the Muslim Brotherhood, he is married with two young daughters. He received his medical degree in Damascus in 1996. At the start of the revolution, Yazan is secretly tending to rebels, which lands him in prison. After fleeing to Damascus, he sends his family to a refugee camp in Turkey and leaves for the north of Syria to run Freedom Hospital with Yasmine.



### **SALEM**

A patient at Freedom Hospital, he lost his memory after surviving a battle between the army and the rebels. Nothing is known about him. He seems to be 26 or 27, and his accent leads one to believe he is from a coastal city, perhaps Lattakia or Tartus.



### **QUALED ABU QATADA**

Born in 1972 in Homs, a former taxi driver. He does not take part in the initial peaceful demonstrations, but joins the rebels once they take up arms. Severely wounded in combat, he has been at the hospital for a long time. He claims to be pro-Muslim Brotherhood, but his opinions are actually closer to those of Salafist Jihadists.



### **ZAHABIYAH**

Born in 1992 in Maarat al-Numaan, near Idlib, she comes from a conservative Sunni family that refused to let her attend university because it was a co-ed environment. When the civil war began, she fled the city with her five brothers, who joined the Free Syrian Army. To help Zahabiyah's family, Yasmine recruits her as a cook at the Freedom Hospital. Haval is her boyfriend.



### **DR. FAWAZ AL-FAWAZ**

Born in 1979 in Lattakia, he comes from an Alawite family, but identifies as agnostic. He first meets Yasmine during a demonstration in Duma, near Damascus. He and Yasmine go on to provide medical care in several Syrian cities. When Yasmine tells Fawaz that she wants to found an underground hospital, he volunteers to be on staff as a doctor.



### **THE COLONEL**

Born in 1951 in the suburbs of Homs, he comes from a traditional Alawite family with ties to Assad's. He studies engineering in Russian and is deeply involved in the Syrian Communist Party opposing Hafez el-Assad in the late 1970s. He then leaves the party to join the Syrian Army, where he makes a career for himself. He is one of the first officers to authorize the use of arms against civilians during the peaceful demonstrations.



Chapter 1

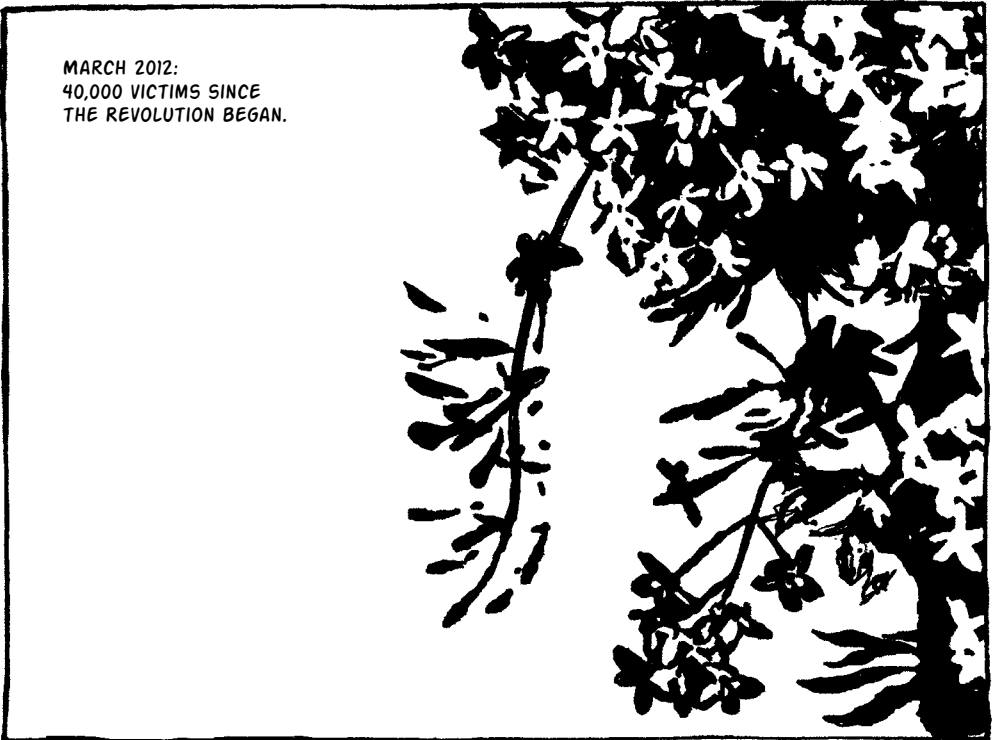
**SPRING**

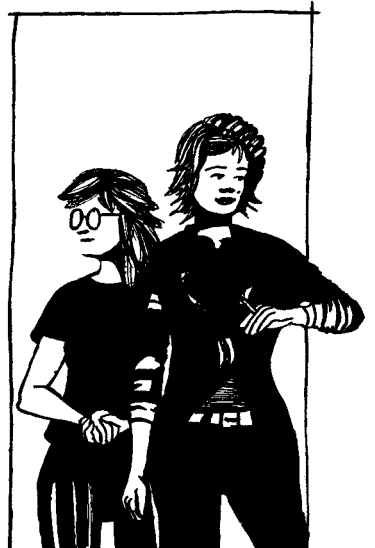


TURKEY, NEAR THE SYRIAN BORDER.



MARCH 2012:  
40,000 VICTIMS SINCE  
THE REVOLUTION BEGAN.







WE MUST BE CRAZY, DOING THIS. WHILE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE FLEEING SYRIA FOR THEIR LIVES.

OUR LITTLE JAUNT GETTING TO YOU?



LOOK, YASMINE, I'D BE LYING IF I SAID IT WASN'T. I MEAN, WE'RE ABOUT TO SNEAK INTO SYRIA ILLEGALLY WITH REBEL FIGHTERS.

EVERYTHING'LL BE FINE. I WAS WORRIED JUST LIKE YOU, THE FIRST TIME.

AND THIS IS THE THIRD, IS IT?



FOURTH, IN THIS DIRECTION. I GOT BACK OUT THREE TIMES USING THE SAME ROUTE.

BESIDES, THEY'RE JUST HELPING US GET ACROSS THE BORDER.

THEY'LL ESCORT US FOR 2 MILES, THEN WE'LL TAKE MY CAR TO GET THROUGH A TOWN THAT'S STILL BEING CONTROLLED BY THE REGIME.





Y'KNOW, YASMINE, SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY A GIRL LIKE YOU BOTHERED STAYING IN SYRIA.

GUILT? MAYBE WHEN YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN STARTING A REVOLUTION LIKE I HAVE, YOU SHOULDN'T JUST WALK AWAY.



IF I SKIPPED THE COUNTRY, I'D FEEL LIKE I WAS BETRAYING THE REVOLUTION.

THAT'S WHY I FOUNDED FREEDOM HOSPITAL.



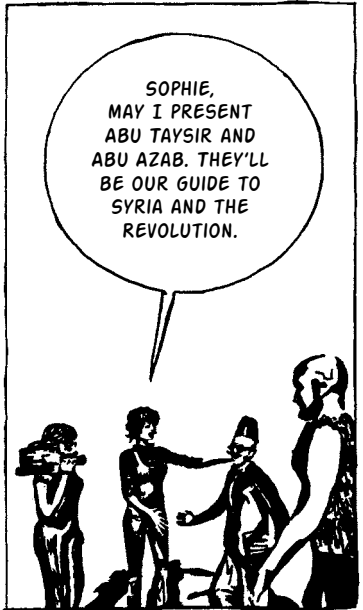
SOMETIMES, I JUST FEEL LIKE STAYING SO I WON'T MISS THE FINISHING TOUCH, THE FALL OF THE REGIME.

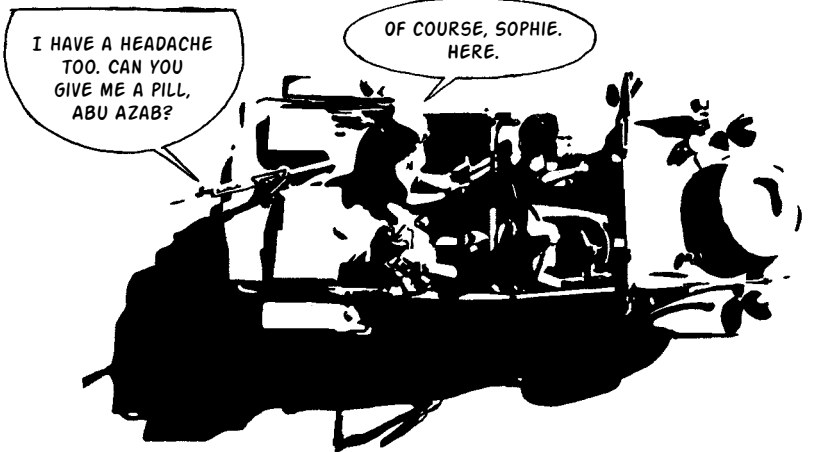
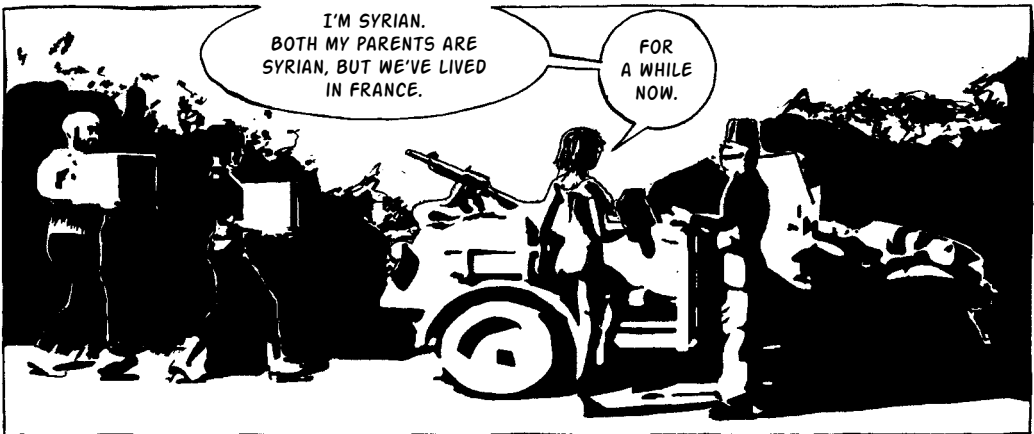
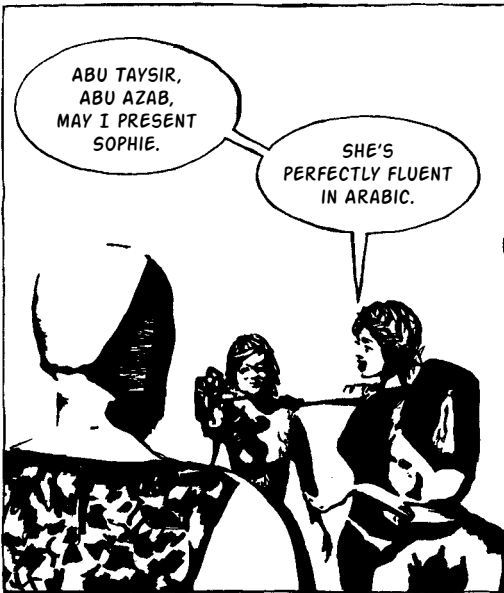


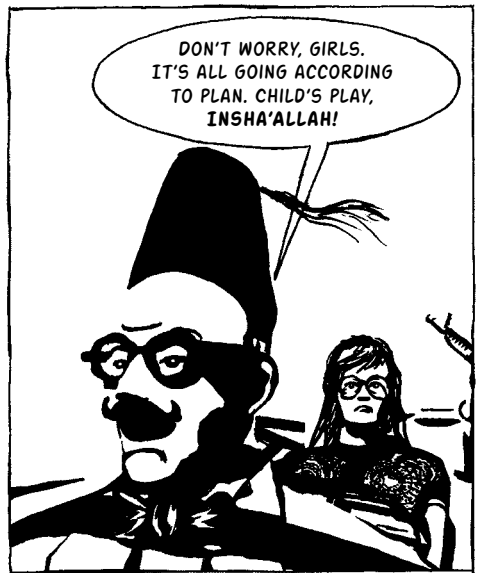
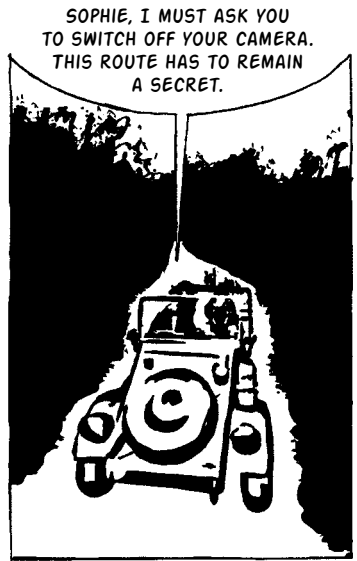
I WOULDN'T MISS THAT FOR THE WORLD.

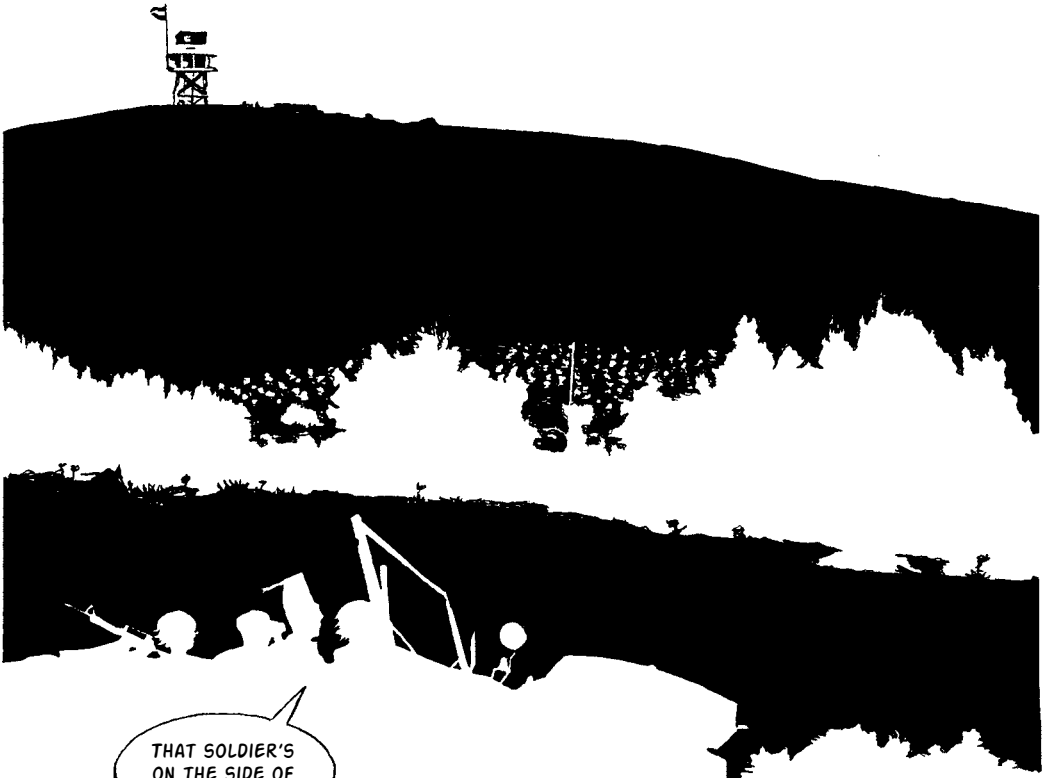


BUT EVERYTHING IN ITS TIME. FOLLOW ME, INTREPID JOURNALIST—YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF.









THAT SOLDIER'S  
ON THE SIDE OF  
THE REBELS.

HE CAN'T  
JOIN US.

SO HE DOES  
WHAT HE CAN.





...AAAND THERE'S THE SIGNAL. WE CAN GO BY SAFELY NOW.



ABU TAYSIR'S A LEADER IN THE REBEL ARMY. YOU SHOULD GET TO KNOW HIM, SOPHIE.

MY PLEASURE.



THE PLEASURE IS ENTIRELY MINE, INSHA'ALLAH!



ACTUALLY, I HAVE A SON, TAYSIR\*.

A BRILLIANT BOY. HE SPEAKS FRENCH.

SOPHIE, YOU'RE A CHARMING GIRL. WHY NOT PUT OUR CHEESE ON YOUR BREAD?



YOUR CHEESE ON MY BREAD?



HA HA HA! ABU TAYSIR'S OFFERING HIS SON IN MARRIAGE SYRIAN-STYLE!

\* ABU TAYSIR MEANS "FATHER OF TAYSIR".



OH, RIGHT.

WELL, MAYBE  
I COULD MEET  
HIM FIRST?

MERELY JOKING,  
MY GIRL. THANKS  
TO ALLAH, I'M MORE  
OPEN-MINDED THAN  
I MIGHT SEEM.

AND MY SON  
TAYSIR IS ALREADY  
STUDYING IN PARIS.





FAREWELL, GIRLS. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES. MAY ALLAH PROTECT YOU.

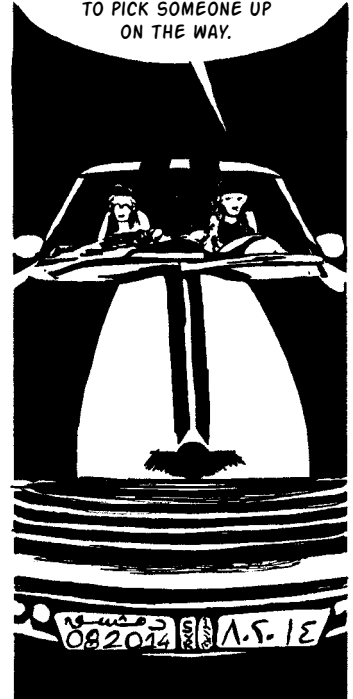


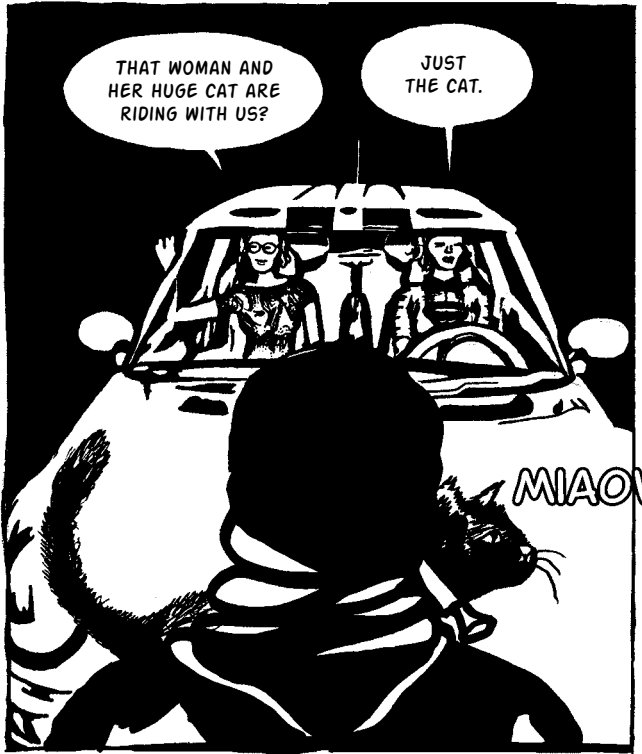
WHY'D YOU STICK A PHOTO OF THAT ANIMAL ON YOUR CAR?



IT'S COVER. WE'RE GOING THROUGH A PRO-BASHAR NEIGHBORHOOD.

C'MON, WE HAVE TO PICK SOMEONE UP ON THE WAY.





THAT WOMAN AND HER HUGE CAT ARE RIDING WITH US?

JUST THE CAT.

MIAOW



HURRY. IT'S LATE.

GOT IT. THANKS, OM FAISAL.

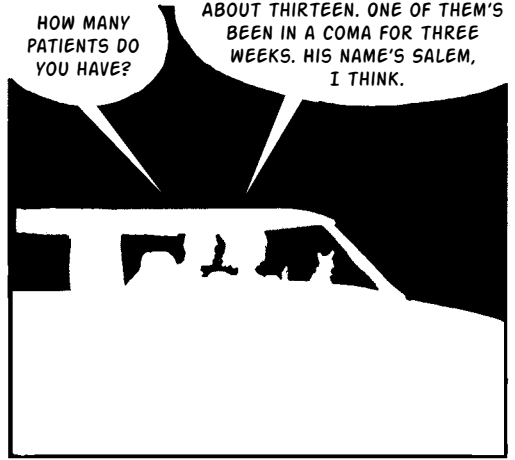


OOOH, HE'S SOOOO CUTE!

HIS OWNER WAS KILLED YESTERDAY.

YOU RUN A VET HOSPITAL TOO?

LOL, HA HA HA!

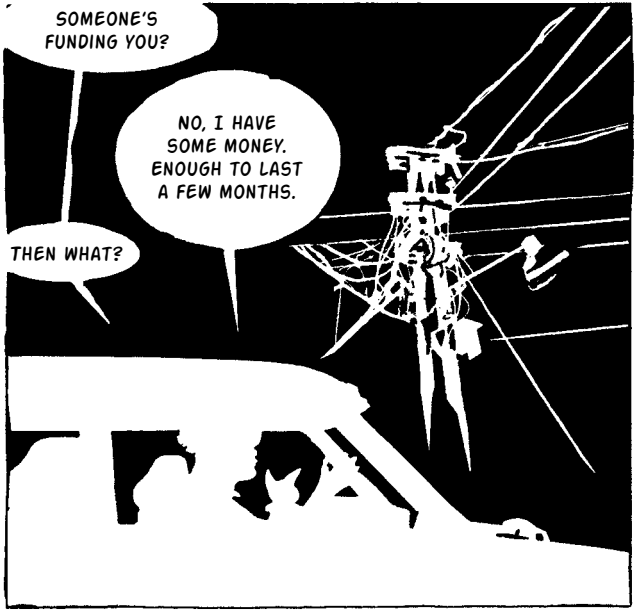






SO... THE HOSPITAL:  
ARE YOU RENTING  
SPACE?

I OWN IT.



SOMEONE'S  
FUNDING YOU?

NO, I HAVE  
SOME MONEY.  
ENOUGH TO LAST  
A FEW MONTHS.

THEN WHAT?



YOU KNOW  
THE STORY OF  
JOHA AND HIS  
DONKEY?

NO.

ONE DAY, THE KING  
TOLD JOHA HE'D GIVE  
HIM A LOT OF MONEY  
IF HE COULD TEACH A  
DONKEY TO SPEAK LIKE  
A HUMAN BEING.

SO JOHA TOOK  
THE MONEY AND  
SWORE TO TEACH  
THE DONKEY TO  
SPEAK WITHIN  
TEN YEARS.

THEY WARNED  
JOHA THE KING  
WOULD HAVE HIM  
EXECUTED IF HE  
PROVED UNTRUE TO  
HIS WORD.

JOHA SAID,  
"IN TEN YEARS,  
EITHER I'LL BE DEAD  
OR THE KING WILL,  
OR THE DONKEY."



BUT WHAT IF TEN YEARS GO BY AND NO ONE DIES?

DON'T WORRY, SOPHIE. THE REVOLUTION'S MAKING PROGRESS, AND THE REGIME WILL FALL IN THE NEXT TEN MONTHS.



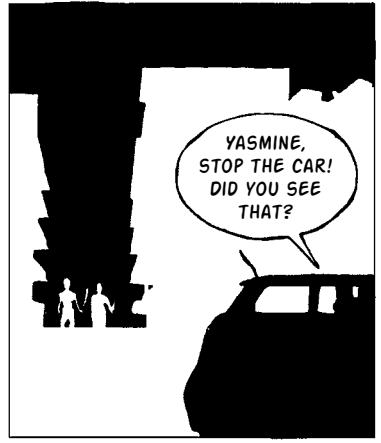
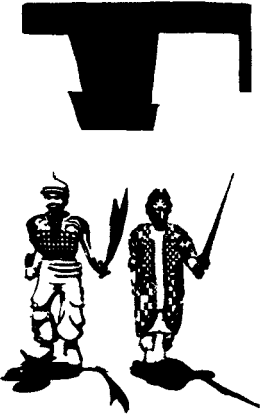
AS FOR ME, I HAVE TO GO TO THE STATES IN SEPTEMBER. I'VE BEEN ACCEPTED AT A COLLEGE.

THAT'S TERRIFIC, YASMINE! CONGRATULATIONS!



NOW YOU'RE UNDERFOOT WHERE YOU BELONG.









MAYBE IT'S  
THAT PILL ABU AZAB  
GAVE YOU. WAS IT  
YELLOW?

YEAAA... MAN,  
I'M THIRSTY.

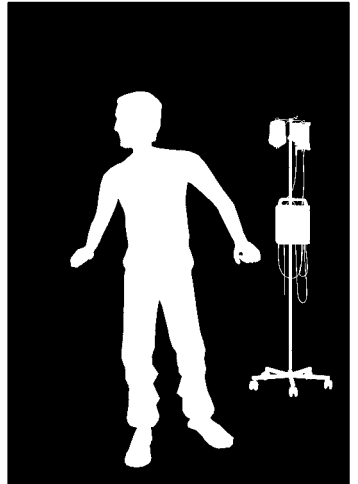
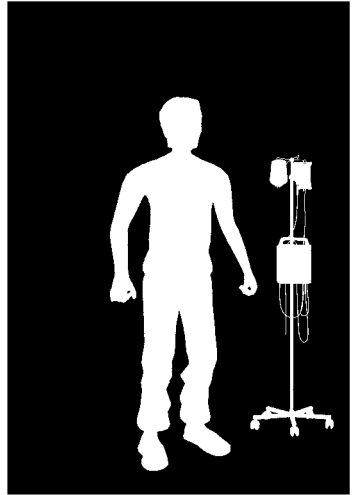
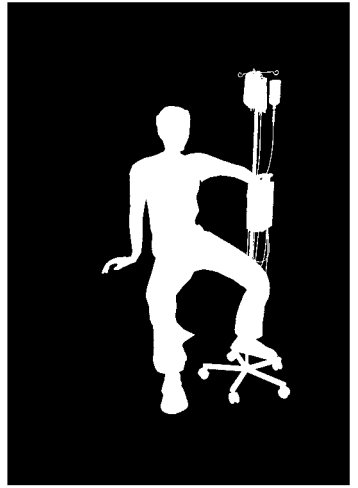
MEANWHILE, AT THE HOSPITAL...



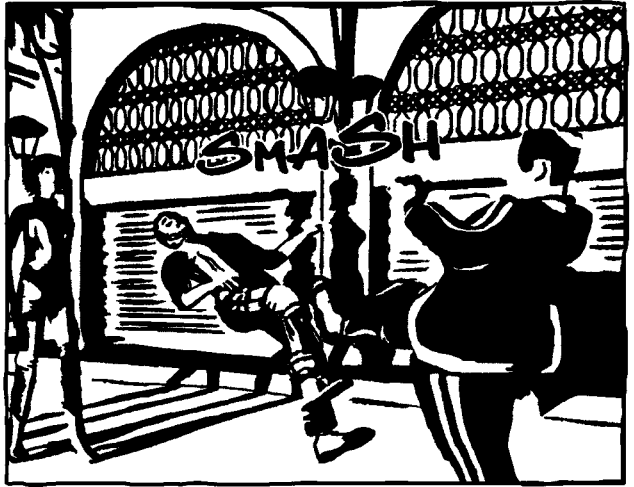


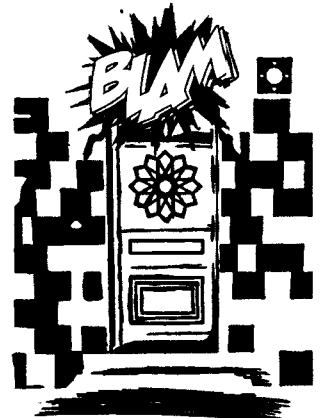
L-L-LOOK,  
HAVAL! H-HE'S  
A-A-AWAKE!

RUN AND TELL  
DR. YAZAN.

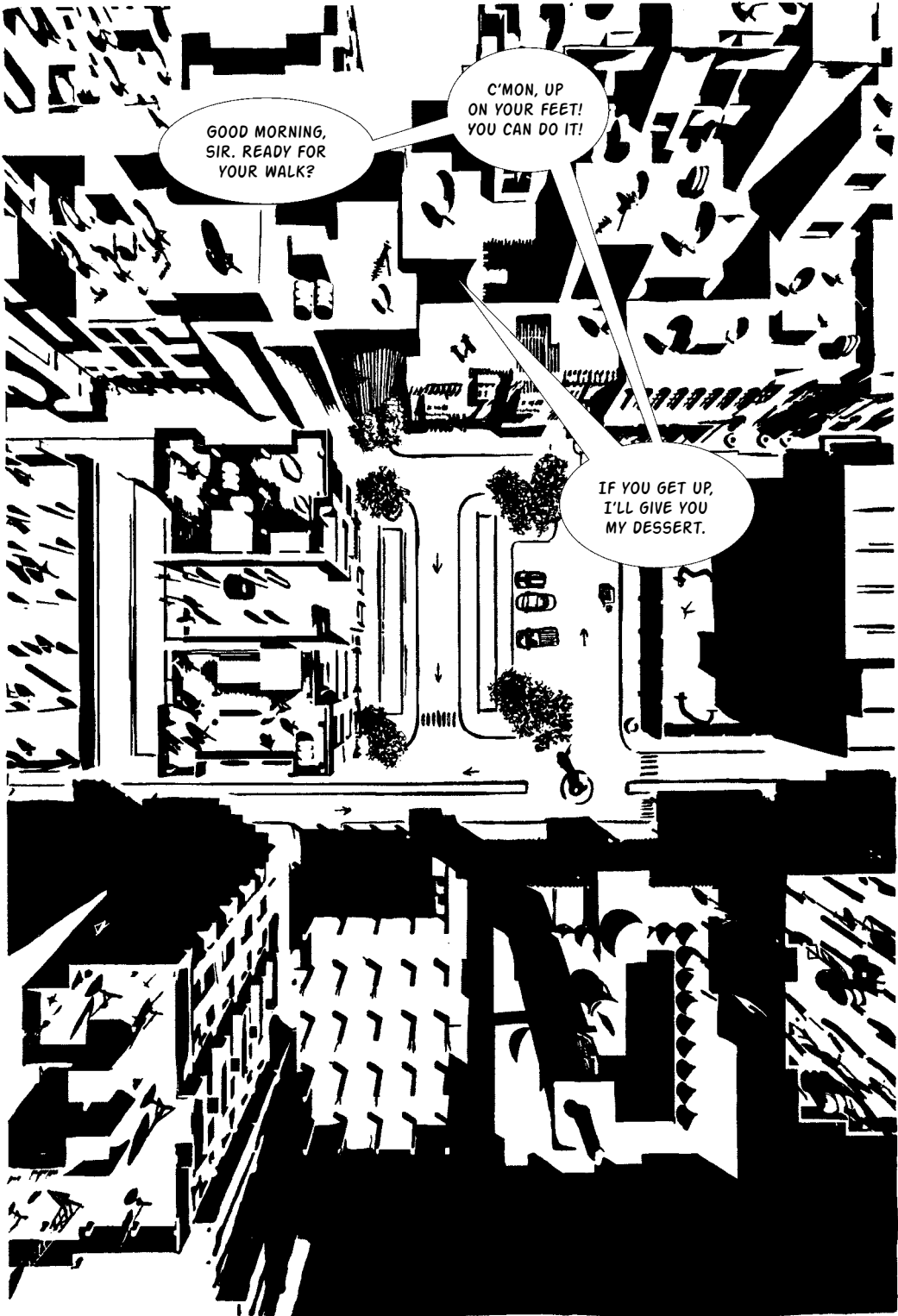








A FEW DAYS AND 150 VICTIMS LATER...



GOOD MORNING,  
SIR. READY FOR  
YOUR WALK?

C'MON, UP  
ON YOUR FEET!  
YOU CAN DO IT!

IF YOU GET UP,  
I'LL GIVE YOU  
MY DESSERT.





HERE'S THE BATHROOM.  
NOW SHOW ME YOU CAN PISS  
LIKE A MAN.



HOW ARE YOU  
MAKING OUT? NEED  
A HAND?

WHO IS  
THAT?



YOU,  
SILLY!

DON'T TELL  
ME YOU DON'T  
RECOGNIZE  
YOURSELF!

DAMN, SON,  
THAT BULLET  
REALLY FUCKED  
YOU UP!



HERE, WASH  
YOUR HANDS FIRST.  
I DON'T WANT ANY  
GERMS.



MAN, IT'S GONNA  
TAKE TIME TO TEACH  
YOU HOW TO PROTECT  
YOURSELF.



DON'T TOUCH THE  
DOORNOBS. NOT EVERYONE  
WASHES THEIR HANDS.